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THE

JUMMOO AND KASHMIR TERRITORIES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

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THE aim I had before me in writing this book was the representation of those geographical facts concerning a country I for many years lived in, which had made such an impression on my mind, or which had been so noted down by me, that there was hope of my passing them on to others in such a way as to make on their minds a clear and distinct image.

The account is limited almost entirely to the description of what I have not only seen, but well remembered. By this I hold myself exempted from giving other reasons why certain places or certain subjects have been dealt with less fully than their importance might seem to require. For though in the course of ten years I visited almost every portion of the tract of country named in the title-page, and in some parts resided long, yet other parts I may have seen but a few times, and others still have passed through but once. And there was equal variety in the extent to which I noted down what I saw, this being sometimes least where I stayed longest. Now since, without having made definite notes on the spot, I have seldom ventured on description, this circumstance in itself will account for much inequality in the treatment of the parts of my subject. But, for all this, I have hopes that there will be found a connection between the portions of the book sufficient to constitute a thread by which the reader

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114 121 may find his way through what is the really complicated geography of a tract which is large in extent and varied in character.

There is no large part of this country that is altogether unknown to the Western world. There is hardly any place we shall reach that has not been visited, and few places that have not been measured, by Englishmen who have preceded me. Many of the previous travellers, too, have given to the public the results of their observations. If I were writing a compilation from their books and memoirs, or if I were attempting to consolidate their information with my own, this would be the place to enumerate their various works. But as I propose rather to give a simple version of what I myself observed, whether it be the same as, or whether it be different from, what has before been told, I shall only refer to other writers where I have been distinctly indebted to them, or where it may be necessary to comment on their facts or their conclusions.

101 [631] [643] I have confined myself in this account to the territories of the Maharaja of Kashmir, for the reason that my travels in the Himalayas were almost entirely restricted to them. This ruler has for his full title "Maharaja of Jummoo and Kashmir." By the Panjābīs he is most commonly called after the former place, by Englishmen after the latter. It is this last practice which has led Englishmen at home to confound "Kashmir" with the whole of the territories. This mistake (which has unfortunately found its way into the maps of India) I try to guard against by using for my book the title "Jummoo and Kashmir Territories," and by restricting the use of the word "Kashmir" to the very defined tract that from time immemorial has borne the name. It must be understood, moreover, that the above title held by the Maharaja is not complete as denoting all the territories ruled by him; for these include, besides the Jummoo districts and Kashmir, the more distant countries of Ladākh, Baltistān, and Gilgit, all of which will come under our notice.

131 433 The relationship, physical and political, of this tract with India now deserves our attention. The map of India, given with this book, will help us to understand its position at the edge of

[Cf. category 11c End Map I -- Analyst]

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the territories, nor much altered their boundaries. On the outbreak of the mutiny of 1857, Maharaja Gulāb Singh chose his side and threw in his lot with the British, moving down a force to aid in the siege of Delhi. Hardly had he done this when death overtook him. His surviving son, the present Maharaja, Ranbīr Singh, who was then on his way to the Panjāb with the troops, returned to take his place in the government of the country, while another commander proceeded to Delhi with the force.

Since that time all has been quiet, except on the north-west frontier, which has been the scene of oft-recurring small wars, some of which are recounted in Chapter XIX., on Dārdistān History. One other treaty has been made between the British Government and the Maharaja, which is given in full in Appendix V. This was done in 1870. It is a commercial treaty designed to open a particular route between the British hill-districts and the Yārkand country through a portion of the Maharaja's territory, which is necessarily traversed.

The countries thus acquired, and, by the political events of 1846, solidly compacted, are divided up for the purposes of government into regions whose limits correspond in some measure, but not altogether, to the old boundaries. In the "Political Map" I have indicated these administrative subdivisions, and in the explanation of it in Chapter XXII. I have shortly described the kind of authority established in each.

I should hardly complete this Introduction without saying a word as to myself—as to how it was that I came to travel over this country, to penetrate into corners of it that, if they have each been visited by different Europeans, have never so many been seen by anyone of that race, or even, I believe, by any native of any of those countries.

In 1862 I entered the Maharaja of Kashmir's service, leaving for it the Geological Survey of Great Britain, to which I then belonged, and came to his Court at Jummoo. My duties for some years were confined to geological investigation, or, more exactly, to looking

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114 mountain chains. Later I had the management of the Forest Department. Lastly I had the position of Governor of Ladākh, from which I retired for the sake of again seeing England, after spending ten years in the service of the Maharaja.

I did not leave the Maharaja, his Court, and the people, without many regrets. Each race, as I became acquainted with them, excited in me a great interest, and has left a strong wish for their welfare. In the Court I formed friendships with some whose co-operation in difficult circumstances will always be remembered by me. Of my master, the Maharaja, I will only venture to say that from him, in what might have been for me an anomalous position, I received a general consideration, dictated by goodwill and by forbearance, which, without counting many special acts of kindness that he would not wish to see acknowledged here, deserve and have from me a gratitude that I am glad have an opportunity of publicly expressing.

128 A few words must follow as to the plan on which this book is written.

I have not given a narrative of any of my journeys, but have taken each tract in succession, and described the physical and other characteristics of it. Besides this, I have given an account of some of the lines of march that join the several tracts; this by way of introduction to them or to show how they are physically separated yet connected by practicable lines of communication.

I begin with the part next to the plain of the Panjāb, the region of the Outer Hills. One chapter treats of their physical aspects, another treats of their inhabitants generally, a third gives a description of Jummoo, the chief place in the Outer Hills, and the capital of the whole country, and of the Court, whose seat is at Jummoo, while a fourth gives notes on certain other places in the same hills.

Next, in Chapter VI., we visit the region of the Middle Mountains, certain portions of them being in some detail described. The subordinate headings will show in what order the various localities are treated of, and that an account of the people who live there also finds a place.

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In Chapter VII. is described the march from Jummoo to Kashmir. Thus we are introduced to that country, to which Chapters VIII., IX., and X. are devoted. 128

Then, in like fashion, the country along the line of march from Kashmir to Leh in Ladākh is described, and we are thus brought into the great tract at the back of the Snowy Range. The account of Ladākh is begun by a chapter (XII.) on the inhabitants; then follows a somewhat detailed description of the different parts of that country, the Chapters XIII., XIV., and XV. being allotted separately for the lower valleys, the higher valleys, and the plateaus.

Baltistān comes next; it is described in Chapter XVI., where the sub-headings will show the course that the description takes.

For the less-known country of Dārdistān there are the four Chapters XVII. to XX.

Thus far the account has gone according to locality. There next comes a chapter on a subject which it seemed best to treat by itself. The few remarks I find myself able to make on the very interesting subject of the languages will be found in Chapter XXI.

The last chapter is one in explanation of the maps and sections. Since I reckon on the reader making use of these on his way through the text, even when they are not specially referred to, it would not be amiss if he were to become acquainted with them by either reading this chapter first of all, or by consulting it on first referring to each of the maps or sections. It will be found to give both a description of each map, isometric view, or section, and also a short summary of some of the various subjects which are treated in a more detailed way in the body of the book.

Though such a plan for the work depends not at all on the order of my journeys, it may be well here to note in what years I visited certain portions of the country, since some of that which passed under my observation may have been true only for that time. Ladākh I saw in the years 1862 (Drās, Kargil, and Suru only), 1869, 1871, and (January) 1872. Baltistān I visited in 1863, and again in 1870; Astor and Gilgit in 1870. For other parts it is impossible to particularise; any time between the years 114

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[pp. i through viii contain no textual material]

PREFACE

121 Some word of explanation seems due when an unknown writer obtrudes a personal narrative on the public. My reason for writing this book was, that as the story of the development of the Gilgit Frontier, told in my letters and diaries, was read with interest by some who saw those papers, it seemed probable that its publication might give to those who have no chance of seeing the sort of life their countrymen lead on an uncivilised frontier, a faithful idea of what such an existence means. The book is a plain and unvarnished tale of the experiences of a frontier officer in times of peace as well as in those of war.

• 114 It was written under adverse circumstances, in the scanty hours of leisure snatched from official work in India, and it could not, for obvious reasons, have been published while I was Military Secretary to the Viceroy of India. The events it describes began ten years and ended five years ago. It contains no information which has not been at the disposal of the man in the street, but it has this advantage: that

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having been behind the scenes it has been possible for me to avoid including the inaccuracies of the mere looker-on.

The book contains no dissertations on Frontier policy, no criticisms or attacks on those who direct that of the Government of India. I have no wish to join the bands who ride out to do battle with the windmills of the forward or backward policy, and it is, in my old-fashioned opinion, disloyal for an officer still in the service to criticise his superiors, even should he consider that he has grounds for his views, which is not my case. Moreover, such criticism is generally foolish. For the man on the Frontier sees but his own square on the chessboard, and can know but little of the whole game in which he is a pawn. It has been my aim merely to give a faithful account of the policy pursued on the Gilgit Frontier, of the steps taken to give it effect, and of the result attained. The reader who expects to find cut-and-dried dogmatic opinions as to the management of our relations with Frontier tribes will be disappointed. These, as a rule, can only be given, with their full effect, by men who know nothing about the question.

The reader also who expects to find a book on the Frontier stuffed with "tales of wild adventure —mostly lies"—will not find them here. A certain amount of exciting incident there could not help

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THE MAKING OF A FRONTIER

CHAPTER I

A MISSION OF ENQUIRY

121 THE interest which attaches to the work of English-
114 men on the borderlands of our great Empire has prompted me to write the following plain record of work and travel in the Hindu-Kush. For four years Warden of the Marches on the northernmost point of our Indian frontier, it was my good fortune, in peace and war, to deal with the most primitive races, to penetrate mountain fastnesses where the foot of a European had never trod, and to wander through the most magnificent scenery that the eye of man has ever looked upon. I trust, therefore, that the following pages may give some idea of what life on the frontier really means.

131 The stretch of frontier to which I refer lies south of that portion of the Himalayan range which divides Chinese and Russian Turkestan and Eastern Afghanistan from the Indian Empire. Officially it is known as the region of the Eastern Hindu-Kush. From east to west its length is some five hundred miles; from north to south its depth is about a hundred and

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That her soldiers, and the ablest of them, consequently believe in the possibility of conquering India, no one who has had the chance of studying the question can doubt. Her diplomats may not consider the task one to be undertaken—they are fairly busy elsewhere. None the less do her tentacles creep cautiously forward towards our Indian frontier. To-day it is the Pamirs, to-morrow it will be Chinese Turkestan or part of Persia, which is quietly swallowed. For every point of possible attack gained is to her advantage, and every man of ours who can be kept locked up in India, or guarding its frontier, when the Battle of Armageddon does come, must be withdrawn from the real chessboard, wherever that may be. That, to my mind, is the crucial point.

If this is no place to discuss "the Russian menace," still less is it to raise the vexed question of frontier policy. I am no believer in catch-words, though they are useful as terms of abuse. The "forward policy," and that of "masterly inactivity," have been wrangled over quite sufficiently. No sensible man nails either colour to his mast. Circumstances, and the races you have to do with, decide cases. Successive Cabinets in England, Conservative and Radical, agreed with the Government of India, that in the case of the Gilgit frontier certain steps were necessary, and the steps were taken. The following pages tell the tale of what was done.

In the summer of 1888 an officer of the Quarter-Master-General's Department being required by Lord Dufferin's Government to visit Gilgit to enquire on the spot into the causes which had led to the outbreak of hostilities between Kashmir and two of its tribu-

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tary States, Hunza and Nagar, I was fortunate enough to be selected for the duty.

Once or twice before the name of Gilgit had appeared for a moment, to be forgotten again immediately. The adventurous traveller, Hayward, had been murdered in the neighbouring valley of Yasin under circumstances of the blackest treachery, and his bones had been laid to rest in Gilgit. An English officer, Major Biddulph, had, in Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty, spent some years there, and had been recalled from the too isolated position after a stormy experience. A mission under Colonel Lockhart, now Sir William Lockhart, Commander-in-Chief in India, had wintered at Gilgit, and from it, as a base, had traversed Hunza, crossed the Hindu-Kush, passed through Wakhan down the Ab-i-Panja, the southernmost branch of the Oxus, and had traversed Chitral territory from end to end. A few adventurous travellers and sportsmen had visited Gilgit, but to most men in India it was a name and nothing more. My satisfaction, therefore, at the thought of penetrating to this little known country was great.

My brother was at the time Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, and from him at Simla I received all the information available on the subject, and my instructions. These preliminaries completed, I started for Gilgit.

At Rawal Pindi, the railway terminus for Kashmir, I found my companion, George Robertson, now Sir George Robertson, K.C.S.I., it having been decided that a doctor should form one of the little party of two. Nothing can, it is said, be such a test

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Mr Chichele-Plowden, then Resident in Kashmir, very kindly put us up in Srinagar. The first thing to be done was to pay my respects to the Maharaja, which I did in company with the Resident. My reception was exceedingly warm and cordial; an old-established friendship of many years' standing had existed between the Maharaja's father and mine, and this was extended at once to the next generation. I found the Maharaja's brothers, Raja Ram Singh, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kashmir State, and Raja Amar Singh, who shortly after became Prime Minister and President of the State Council, equally disposed to be friendly. The acquaintance so auspiciously begun, ripened, I am glad to think, into warm regard and friendship, and during the five years I was connected with the affairs of Kashmir I received, however inconvenient my demands may have sometimes been, the heartiest assistance.

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I found the Maharaja quite satisfied with the idea of my going to Gilgit, and, if necessary, on to Chitral, but he was very averse to my going to Chaprot. This was the frontier fort out of which the Kashmir garrison had been turned by the Hunza-Nagar combination during the preceding winter, and the Maharaja had not yet heard of its having been re-occupied by his forces. He was very averse, therefore, to my adventuring myself north of Gilgit, and as I, on my part, had not the least anxiety to have my throat cut, or to fall a prisoner into the hands of the tribesmen and to bring difficulties on Government, it was agreed that my movements, after my arrival at Gilgit, should depend on the position of the Maharaja's

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troops and the advice of His Highness's local authorities.

The occupation of the Gilgit district had never paid. The Dogras had suffered heavy loss in it again and again, but the honour of the Kashmir Durbar (the title usually applied to the government of a native state), would not for a moment permit of withdrawal. Moreover, withdrawal would not have answered the purpose of securing peace; it would merely have opened, by uncovering the right bank of the Indus, a road constantly used in former days for raiding into Baltistan or Little Thibet, the next province on the north-east belonging to Kashmir. The remedy would have been worse than the disease; a State which begins retiring is in the East the natural and lawful prey of its adventurous neighbours. I found no question of withdrawal being discussed; the attention of the Durbar was entirely turned to securing its position on the frontier, and to retaking the Fort of Chaprot. Throughout the winter nothing could be done, the passes leading to Gilgit were closed by snow, but with the return of spring every nerve had been strained to accomplish this object.

The Durbar was immensely proud of its army, which at this time was very numerous and costly. It was quite ignorant of the fact that the army was without the very rudiments of organisation, that it was merely an unwieldy agglomeration of units, and that its leaders, men for the most part of good family and of fighting instincts, were one and all as innocent as the babe unborn of the art of war. Trusting to the numbers of their troops and to the